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ABSTRACT

This paper addresses the need to inform all students of the importance of multicultural issues and the impact that cultural diversity will have on global society and offers a model that examines the problematic issue of incorporating a multicultural curriculum into what has been termed "traditional curriculum." The author develops the criteria needed for cultural totality in curricula and examines various social determinants that significantly impact curriculum development as it relates to the historical racism as a social deterrent to a culturally enriched curriculum. In addition, the paper highlights specific techniques and strategies for infusing culturally diverse materials into curricula that are currently being used to assist all students to become better-informed citizens and to understand the rich history and culture of various diverse groups in the United States and globally. (Contains 16 references.) (GLR)

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A Conceptual Model of Infusing Multicultural Curriculum in Various Academic Disciplines in Higher Education

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ABSTRACT

The issue of inclusion of multicultural curriculum materials has been a major problem historically in the public schools and various disciplines in higher education. As we approach the 21st century, it is critical to move with all deliberate speed to inform all students of the importance of multicultural issues and the impact that cultural diversity will have on our global society.

This model examines the problematic issue of infusing multiculture curriculum into what has been termed "traditional curriculum." This paper develops the criteria needed for cultural totality in curriculum and examines various social determinants which significantly impact curriculum development as it relates to the historical racism as a social deterrent to culturally enriched curriculum. In addition, this presentation will highlight specific techniques and strategies for infusing culturally diverse materials into curriculum currently being used to assist all students to become better informed citizens and to understand the rich history and culture of various diverse groups in the United States and globally.

INTRODUCTION

The United States is one of the most ethnically diverse societies in the world. The nature of this diversity is attributed to the American tradition of democracy that attracted its share of people from all over the world. However, in spite of this diversity, deeply entrenched in the social fibers of the society is the Eurocentric notion of racial superiority of White Anglo Saxons over all others. Consequently, European Anglo-Saxon cultural values and norms prevails and dominates every aspect of the society. One avenue through which this dominance is perpetuated and maintained is through the public school system primarily because the function of education is the transmission of culture. In this instance, the transmission of European Anglo Saxon culture.

This transmission occurs, basically, through the curriculum. Curriculum, which should define meaningful learning experiences, is the foundation of the school system. However, traditional curriculum currently in use is monolistic in nature and reflects the images, values and beliefs of the dominant culture in society. Thus, the curriculum is essentially Eurocentric by design and reflects racist and culturally biased ideals. This practice of ignoring ethnic diversity in this society, ultimately sets the stage for miseducation of students.

A significant shift in social demographics in the last three decades has created an urgent need for multicultural education to equip all citizens, regardless of cultural background, with a realistic, global view of the importance of the enriched cultural diversity of American society. Statistics show that by the year 2000 there will be a startling

change in the ethnic composition of the labor force. Economic stability will, therefore, depend heavily on the work potential and ability of culturally diverse groups in the labor force. Comprehensive multiculture education will enable all Americans to compete effectively within the work place and live decent, enriched lives.

During what is sometimes referred to as "the turbulent sixties," social unrest was at the centerfold of the social and political climate of the nation. The rapidly changing social and political climate during this period dictated the demand for ethnic inclusion in most aspects of life, especially in the schools. Many curriculum programs were introduced that appeared multi-cultural in nature. However, most of these programs designed to address ethnic diversity were mere fads and were eventually phased out or diminished in scope.

These past efforts failed because of a number of factors: (1) They were not taken seriously and were attempts on the part of mainstream America to placate angry militants; (2) The scope of such programs were limited and restricted due to poor design and lack of commitment on the part of those implementing such programs and (3) Never at any time were any of these programs infused into traditional programs thereby becoming a permanent feature of curriculum.

Today, thirty or more years later, there is another movement to address the same issues of ethnic diversity and multicultural education in this culturally diverse society. The challenge for ensuring social stability in this society is to refocus on a multicultural perspective in education, only this time - do it right. Since it is obvious by available research that curriculum is a prime factor in determining how to best equip students in higher education on acquiring adequate skills to function in this highly diverse, technological society - then the focus must be on curriculum. Curriculum is the avenue

through which students will be prepared to meet the challenging issues in a world which has become a global village.

This paper will examine the multicultural curriculum infusion model through the concept of paradigms. However, prior to exploring how paradigms are used to explain the multicultural infusion model, it is necessary to define paradigms and to illustrate how they impact curriculum design.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Curriculum in higher education does not and historically has not reflected the cultural experiences of the various ethnic groups in this society. Thus, the content of courses, and therefore, the academic experiences for ethnically different students, are void and irrelevant. In addition, mainstream white students are fed with stereotypic images of culturally diverse students and people in the society. As a result, white students have historically been miseducated in their educational journey by default.

In recent decades, there has been a great deal written on the topic of multicultural and multiethnic education. However, few educators have postulated an infusion model or discussed paradigm shifts to focus on the infusion of multicultural curriculum content. Instead, traditional curriculum included in most academic disciplines consist of various isolated courses that emphasized contributions and activities of select ethnic groups. In the last two decades, major universities and educational institutions established separate ethnic studies departments which offered select core courses: African American Studies, Native American Studies, Hispanic American Studies and so forth. These centers also housed a

variety of ethnic activities for students.

However, in the 1980's a movement emerged on major institutions to minimize the impact of these specialized ethnic studies departments and to restrict multicultural education in general. One method used was to lump these various ethnic studies departments into one department. Course offerings dwindled significantly and Ethnic Faculty and/or professionals hired to teach these specialized ethnic study courses, were terminated or reassigned. Never, at any time during this period, was an attempt made by educational officials to make these ethnic course/curriculum a permanent part of the traditional curriculum. Nor, were other aspects of these institutions altered to accommodate ethnic diversity.

More importantly, these courses were never given the status or credibility of traditional courses offered by institutions. In fact, these specialized ethnic courses never moved beyond the status of being elective, nonrequired courses. Consequently, the average white student did not bother to take ethnic studies courses. The majority of students taking these courses were ethnically different students or those students majoring in ethnic studies. Less than 5% of all majors declared at major institutions in the last twenty years has been in ethnic studies. Research indicates, however, that even when the buzz word at major institutions was "ethnic studies," there was not a corresponding increase in enrollment of ethnically diverse students.

The dramatic impact of this deliberate exclusion of ethnic studies and multiculture curriculum has resulted in widespread ethnic illiteracy among whites who know very little about culturally diverse people or groups. Moreover, this exclusion had a tremendous polarizing impact on many students who questioned the value, and therefore, worth of

ethnic studies. These students represents tomorrow's decision makers. Without a sound knowledge of ethnic diversity and its relevance in this global economy, these students will be at a clear disadvantage.

However, this ethnic imbalance creates other problems as well. Statistics show that three-fourths of the world is made up of people of color. Eurocentric attitudes and ethnic illiteracy will prove to be a definite disadvantage for Americans in the world marketplace. Economic stability will depend on how well Americans can function in other cultures. And, at the present time, major institutions are not changing fast enough to prepare students who will one day work in this global, culturally diverse, village. Thus, the complete infusion of multicultural education into traditional curriculum is imperative, rather than one of choice.

PARADIGM DEFINED

A paradigm is a conceptual framework of values and rules that guide inquiry. Adam Smith in his classical works: Power of the Mind defined paradigms as a shared set of assumptions and the way we perceive the world. Similarly, William Harmon in his book: Guide to the Future states that a paradigm is a way of perceiving, thinking, valuing, and doing associated with a particular vision of reality. Marilyn Fugerson, on the other hand, in her book, The Aquarian Conspiracy, states that a paradigm is a framework of thought; a scheme for understanding and explaining certain aspects of reality. Finally, Joel Barker in his provocative works: Future Edge: Discovering Paradigms of Success presents a series of scholars interpretation of paradigms. He states that a paradigm is a set of rules and regulations (written or unwritten) that does two things: it establishes or defines boundaries and it tells you how to behave inside the boundaries in order to be successful.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF PARADIGMS IN EDUCATION

As noted, the word paradigm refers to a specific set of rules and/or guidelines used in inquiry. Paradigm, as used in an educational context, has a special meaning primarily because the end product of intellectual inquiry directly effects people. All educational processes involves the use and implementation of paradigms. Effective use of Paradigms in curriculum design results in an equalizing of the processes used in the development of curriculum for use within educational systems at all levels. This equalization process is designed to enhance and enrich the curriculum, rather than restrict its growth and potential.

Paradigm, however, is not a new concept. For years philosophers have been fascinated with the inquiry of paradigms and how paradigms occur. Thomas Kuhn (1962) in "The Structure of the Scientific Revolution," solicited views from various academic disciplines to foster the argument that the understanding of science in any era began or takes form from a conceptual framework. Kuhn's definition of this paradigm or framework was a loosely connected set of ideas, values and rules that govern the conduct of inquiry, the way in which data are interpreted and the way the world may be viewed.

Shubert (1986) and Tanner & Tanner (1980) states that Ralph Tyler's (1949) "Basic Principles in Curriculum and Instruction," synthesized the paradigmatic question in the curriculum field. Tyler's work in (1949) focused on the following questions: (1) What education purposes should the school seek to obtain? (2) How can learning experiences be selected which are likely to be useful in attaining these objectives? (3) How can learning

experiences be organized for effective instruction? and (4) How can the effectiveness of learning experience be evaluated?

The significance of this pedagogical inquiry is critical in developing a curriculum that emphasizes multicultural education. Anyon (1980) demonstrates that children from various social classes and ethnic groups are taught quite differently. Hence, the transformation of present day curriculum requires that courses lacking in social and ethnic diversity must be discarded and replaced with enriched curriculum that reflects the pluralism of the nation in the academic arena. Slaughter (1988), supports this view and suggests that as various institutions reassess the climate of their institution, a major discussion will emerge that focuses on the specific role of the academic process and the role of curriculum.

In exploring a comparative view of the paradigm model, Jurgen Habermas, a contemporary philosopher, focused on the theory of knowledge and its cultural implication. In his work, "Knowledge and Human Interest (1971)," he outlined a comparative analysis of three paradigms of inquiry which he called sciences. Shubert (1980), in exploring Habermas' concepts of paradigms, states that all knowledge is historically and social rooted and interest bound. He goes on to state that human interest requires different structure of knowledge and in turn, requires different ways of knowing and different forms of rationality.

The essence of one of Habermas' principles lies in the fact that knowledge can be value-free based on the objective world we live in (Carr and Kemis, 1986). Habermas' work further illustrates that such issues of moral principles or equality are not considered in developing curriculum which select specific text books to perpetuate societies values and concepts.

Tyler's (1949) paradigm focused on four distinct areas of explaining curriculum inquiry. The most significant area was the area of content. Tyler referred to that variable as learning experience. Over the years, this focus has been interpreted to mean subject learning activities and learning experiences. Shubert (1980) states: "Whether content leans on the direction of subject matter, activities or experience, it is important to analyze the sources or criteria from which it is derived." Eight such criteria are analyzed: (1) social need, (2) survival, (3) disciplinary, (4) utility, (5) publisher decision, (6) politics, (7) learners interest, (8) democratic action. It is apparent from this discussion that content is a critical area in formulating curriculum inquiry and design.

Content also sets the stage for concept formation to become internalized thus allowing skill development to occur in the educational process. In order for multicultural education to become a reality, it is, therefore, necessary to alter existing educational paradigms to meet the ethnic diversity of the general student body.

PARADIGM OF MULTICULTURAL INFUSION MODEL

Traditional curriculum development focuses on the use of two paradigms: What kinds of substantive topics will be addressed and How or what methods of inquiry will be used. The Multicultural Infusion Model expands the use of Paradigms to include:

(1) What is the criteria of the curriculum.
(2) What social determinants impact curriculum.

The nature of paradigms in the Multicultural Infusion Model focuses on a comprehensive view of examining and infusing cultural diversity in educational curriculum. Why is the criteria paradigm so important? Why is it important to understand the paradigm of social

determinants? They are important because traditional curriculum focused on technical paradigms for curriculum development: the why and the how. They were void of clarity in terms of existing social realities and the multiethnic makeup of the society. This resulted in a one dimensional, eurocentric curriculum which excludes all other ethnic groups in the society.

Therefore, in order to enhance and improve the curriculum, the Multicultural Infusion Model for Curriculum identified these two additional paradigms to be used. Thus, the Multicultural Infusion Model involves a process of combining the criteria for effective multiculture curriculum with existing social determinants.

CRITERIA PARADIGM

The criteria for developing effective, ethnically diverse curriculum includes the following:

(1) **Statement of Purpose**. Purpose must be clear, consistent, defensible and culturally representative and non-contradictory in tone. For example, educational purposes in science curriculum should not contradict those in mathematics, social science or the humanities.

(2) **Support**. The curriculum must have the support of school officials and the community.

(3) **Personnel**. The attitudes, beliefs, values and ideas of personnel involved in the development or implementation of the curriculum must be supportive.

(4) **Finances**. There must be financial support for the implementation of the curriculum from school officials, local, state and federal governments.

(5) **Students**. Students should have input and their reaction to the curriculum should be evaluated.

These variables identified in the criteria paradigm were not developed to occur as anomalies, but as a practical and realistic model based on sequential and logical rationale. Infusing the elements of this criteria paradigm will strengthen existing curriculum design

techniques and strategies.

Various social determinants interact and impact curriculum design. Understanding these social determinants will allow curriculum designers the insight into the development of effective curriculum. All curriculum evolves from special social determinants in the society. These determinants are not absolutes, rather they shift and flex with changing social conditions in the society. The criteria used to design and thus, implementation of curriculum is dependent upon these prevailing social conditions.

Social changes in societies usually are, basically, gradual in nature. However, important social change is usually imposed from the top. The significance of change can be determined by the degree of change or impact on the society. Five distinct important social determinants which clearly impacts curriculum development/design include:

A. **SOCIOLOGICAL DETERMINANTS:** Sociological variables include: the socialization process, through which all Americans are socialized; culture, family, values, attitudes, customs and traditions. The socialization process is the essence of every social group, whether it be in the mountains of Tennessee or in a rural area in Mississippi. Unfortunately, this nation has frowned at the concept of "difference." In fact, to be different in America has come to mean to be inferior.

In the public schools the social myth of homogeneity has result in the sacrifice of the attributes, beliefs and ideas of all other cultural groups. In curriculum development the reality of ethnic diversity demands inclusion. More important, it requires that sociological attributes of all groups be included in the curriculum and given the appropriate recognition and status.

B. **ECONOMIC DETERMINANTS:** Economics is an essential element in curriculum design because economic factors can significantly influence the content of curriculum. The most significant aspect of this determinant is, therefore, the equitable distribution or lack thereof of financial resources to introduce and maintain chosen curriculum materials and academic institutions. Thus, curriculum development and implementation is closely linked to who is controlling the purse strings.

Prestigious universities tend to receive more financial support because of political pressure from various politicians. The success or failure of educational institutions depends heavily on the rise and fall of the favorable economic standing of an institution, rather than the quality of the institution itself. Economics has historically served as a catalyst for the perpetuation of elitist views and ideas that have been reflected in traditional curriculum.

In the public school system there is a broad disparity between poverty-ridden, inner city communities and wealthy suburbs. This Multiculture Infusion Model requires an equalization of the distribution of financial resources in order to ensure that there is a consistent quality in curriculum throughout the system.

C. **POLITICAL DETERMINANTS:** Politics inevitably influence most aspects of our society. The curriculum in education is not excluded. The political climate of American society dictates in what specific direction the curriculum in education move. Issues of busing, school choices, desegregation, all politically impact the curriculum. Higher education is especially impacted by this process.

Political influence is often times presented in the form of political views reflected by teachers, authors of text books and even college administrators. Many times conservatives

put pressure on universities to embrace specifics views through the curriculum in the form of various courses and majors available to students. Those who advocate extreme views feel that curriculum content should reflect and promote their views. Those views however, may be liberal, conservative or even radical.

Curriculum can also reflect the views of special interest groups. Consequently, the interest of the learner is not the central issue or concern of curriculum designers but, rather, the views held by special interest groups who may exert financial influence on various institution of higher education. Thus, it is evident that politics as a determinant of curriculum inquiry can greatly impact the educative process. Political diversity is a national reality. However, in order to enhance and enrich the curriculum the Multiculture Infusion Model requires that a holistic political view become an intricate aspect of curriculum.

D. **DEMOGRAPHIC DETERMINANTS**: Demographic influences constitute the initial make-up of specific ethnic groups. The changing demographics in this society force curriculum designers to reexamine the process of curriculum inquiry. The major focus on demographics is visualized through the following areas:

- Population shift
- Geographic Polarization
- Ethnic empowerment.

Each specific area is critical and greatly impacts the nature of curriculum design in higher education. The Civil Rights Movement of the 60's brought with it the demand for the inclusion of more people of ethnic diverse backgrounds. The movement provided access to ethnic groups on the decision making process as to what curriculum courses should be offered, who should teach them and what political or philosophical view should be

reflected. Although this input has been limited in recent years, the impact of shifting democratic demographics has had a tremendous impact on the curriculum development process.

Finally, in this instance changing democratic demographics provided culturally diverse groups political power to impact their own lives, thereby greatly impacting the life style of students in higher education and in this society. The Multiculture Infusion Model has the flexibility to include the constantly changing aspects of democratic demographics thereby ensuring social continuity.

E. **PEDAGOGICAL DETERMINANTS:** The nature of how information is presented to students is critical in the process of internalization of concepts and principles. Curriculum design is greatly influenced by the way materials are presented to students and the nature or the learning theory employed to assist students in internalizing concepts. Due to the rapid demographics changes that are occurring in this society, by the year 2065 cultural diverse groups will make up the majority of the citizens of this society. At the same time, a significant decrease in the ethnic diversity of staff and school personnel will mean that the average teacher in the public school system will be white, middleclass.

Thus, teacher training and sensitivity of staff/school personnel is required to ensure that the criteria, philosophy and the teaching patterns reflect a multiethnic approach to education. This involves the elimination of eurocentric attitudes and beliefs which directly impact learning. In the past racism provided the rationale, shape and form of the curriculum being used. With the exception of a few times in history (i.e., The great depression, WWII, the 1960's, etc.) traditional curriculum has remained constant in

presenting a White Anglo Saxon view of the world. These social patterns account for the lack of cultural diversity and significant information within traditional curriculum.

For this reason, the design of this model focuses on various social determinants impacting curriculum inquiry, specific ethnic groups, academic disciplines and students. Each academic discipline requires an infusion of the ethnic group cultural historical experiences/data into mainstream curriculum. The methods used to implement the experiences is through role models, textbook selection, bibliographies, case studies, research projects and instruction.

Although paradigms tend to change over a period of time, the Multicultural Infusing Model represents a major paradigm shift in the area of curriculum reform. The paradigm shift to the multicultural infusion model represents a major theoretical and methodological approach to curriculum reform in the public schools and higher education. A critical advantage of the Multicultural Infusion Model is that it presents a comprehensive approach to incorporating Multicultural education in all academic disciplines in education.

The curriculum is a purveyor of culture and it sets the stage for the educative experience and life styles of students in this contemporary society. Consequently, curriculum reform must focus on multicultural infusion of information available that includes ethnic and cultural realism. It is the responsibility, therefore, of curriculum designers and educators to integrate curriculum to reflect ethnic diversity. Thus, total curriculum should be designed to accomplish the following educational and social objectives:

1. To include each ethnic group and their cultural experience as a regular part of the curriculum in each academic discipline.
2. To expose all students to the multicultural and multi-dimensional aspects of culturally diversity in higher education.

3. To focus on the importance each ethnic group as significant and valuable in terms of cultural values, lifestyles, customs and contributions to society.

4. To foster and promote understanding and awareness of each ethnic group in our culturally diverse society.

5. To promote the importance of teaching strategies in teaching culturally diverse students

6. To focus on racism awareness and the impact that racism has had historically fostering stereotypic view of various cultural diverse students.

7. To expose students to the importance of multicultural education and its role in developing skills to communicate in our global world.

In order to refine the curriculum, the process of the Multiculture Infusion Model is continuous and on-going. The end product is an inclusive, comprehensive, ethnically embracing curriculum in which all materials are given equal weigh in terms of significance, importance and presentation thereby presenting curriculum materials in their totality. This will lead, ultimately, to a more diverse physical, social and political learning environment.

CONCLUSION

As a result of the failure on the part of educators, researchers, state and federal government officials to provide an equitable, culturally diverse curriculum to students in the public school system and higher education, dramatic curriculum reform is critically needed. The implementation of the multicultural infusion model will not only enhance the academic curriculum and change the make up of the student body and staff, it will also create a more diverse physical, social, and political environment. In addition, it will set the stage of administrative leadership to implement more goals and objectives focusing on equity and diverse issues.

Racism, sexism, multicultural education and cultural pluralism can only be adequately addressed in the curriculum when reflective and critical thinking educators confront the challenge facing them in this contemporary and cultural diverse society. However, there are several caveats educators must be cognizant of surrounding a paradigm shift in order to introduce an effective multicultural infusion model in higher education:

1. Racism as an ingrained element of the ideological structure of American society.
2. The tendency of curriculum designers and educators to scale down the importance of diversity.
3. Political groups and special interest groups influence on curriculum.

Sometimes ideas meet resistance from forces within the school system and curriculum hopes are dashed by larger societal, cultural and ideological problems. Such problems include: poverty, autocracy, indoctrination, ill health, suppression of inquiry, nationalism, dissolution of the family, prejudices, control, and, racism. In reality, curriculum serves as a definition and implementation of culture and is heavily influenced by various societal factors.

However, as educators we must be willing to examine intensively the on-going residue of racism which promotes ethnic illiteracy and culture conflict. The Sociological Paradigm of Racism further supports the critical necessity to develop paradigms reflective of the multicultural infusion model. It is significant to note that present and past curriculum has been in all essence a facsimile of the sociological paradigm of Racism. The paradigm of multicultural infusion model cannot be seen as a panacea for alleviating all of societies social ills. However it can signal a start to assist in bringing about much needed social change.

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